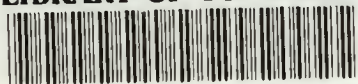


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ON THE LATE

DANIEL WEBSTER,

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF YALE COLLEGE,

JANUARY 18, 1853.

By HIRAM KETCHUM, Esq.,
OF NEW YORK.

NEW HAVEN:

PRINTED BY J. H. BENHAM.

1853.

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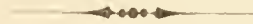
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NEW HAVEN, YALE COLLEGE, JAN. 20, 1853.

TO HIRAM KETCHUM, ESQ.,

Dear Sir,—We have the honor of transmitting to you resolutions unanimously adopted by the students of Yale College, on Wednesday, 19th inst.

Resolved, That the thanks of the students of Yale College be tendered to HIRAM KETCHUM, ESQ., of New York, for the highly instructive and eloquent eulogy pronounced by him on the 18th inst., on the late DANIEL WEBSTER.

Resolved, That a copy of the eulogy be requested for publication.

On behalf of the Students,

CHARLES BROOKS,
ALBERT W. BISHOP,
JAMES M. GILLESPIE.

NEW YORK, JAN. 22, 1853.

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, inclosing the resolutions unanimously adopted by the students of Yale College, one of which requests a copy of my eulogy on the late DANIEL WEBSTER, for publication.

In compliance with this request, I with great pleasure send you a copy of my address, delivered on the 18th inst.

I wish that this address was more worthy of the subject which it proposes to discuss; but, such as it is, I hope it may furnish some additional inducements to the perusal and study of Mr. Webster's works.

Allow me, gentlemen, to improve this opportunity to return my thanks to the Students and the President and Professors of Yale College, for the attention they were pleased to give me in the delivery of the address; and for yourselves allow me to tender my acknowledgments for the uniform courtesy which I have received from you as a Committee.

I remain, with true regard,

Your obedient servant,

HIRAM KETCHUM.

MESSRS. CHARLES BROOKS,
ALBERT W. BISHOP, and
JAMES M. GILLESPIE.



A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF YALE COLLEGE :—

I AM fully aware that I am indebted for the honor of appearing before you on this occasion to the fact of my known personal relations with our illustrious countryman, DANIEL WEBSTER—now, alas! no more among the living! This knowledge indicates plainly that you desire to know something more of Mr. Webster than an ordinary acquaintance, or even a thorough knowledge of his public career would impart. I shall, to the extent of my ability, gratify this natural and very reasonable curiosity.

I did, indeed, know Mr. Webster somewhat intimately, for the last twenty years of his life. That knowledge, increased by a thorough study of his character and qualifications, inspired me with an ardent desire to see what remained of his life, wholly devoted to the public service of his country. I was satisfied that his profound study, and close application to the subject, had made him better acquainted with the true nature and character of our American Republican institutions, than any man among the living or the dead; I desired therefore that this knowledge should be used for the benefit of the country. More than all, did I desire, for the sake of the country, and the cause of republican liberty, and not alone for the gratification of Mr. Webster himself, that he should be placed in the highest political position under the constitution, where his power and influence might be most efficiently exerted in giving such a direction to the administration of the government as should be felt in all future time. To the advancement of this end I employed all the influence I possessed to the last hour of his existence, but in common with many others, actuated by similar sentiments, I failed.

Now nothing remains but that his example and teachings be used to accomplish the great objects of his life, “the preservation of

the union, the maintenance of the constitution, and the advancement of the country to still higher stages of prosperity and renown." Earnestly desiring that Mr. Webster's productions should be read, and his principles inculcated throughout every portion of this country, where can I find more efficient aid to accomplish these objects than among the young gentlemen I have the honor to address. Collected from every part of the Union, representing many of the most respectable families in the land, themselves endeavoring, by the facilities and inducements here afforded, to become men of distinction, what six hundred young men in this country are destined to exert a wider influence than the students of Yale College.

To you however, young gentlemen, let me say, before I proceed further, never permit yourselves to despair of the Republic. It is true, Mr. Webster is dead, and the country deeply mourns his loss; it also feels the loss of other distinguished men who have been recently removed by death; but let us hope that Providence, in mercy to this land, hitherto highly favored, will supply their places. Why may not that country look to you for such supplies? You have better opportunities for improvement, more facilities, more thorough instruction to enable you to rise to eminent positions than ever they enjoyed. I entreat you, not only for your own sakes, not only for the honor of your *alma mater*, but for the sake of your country, by the most assiduous application, and untiring study, to improve to the uttermost, the opportunities here afforded you. Let every one of you set his mark high, and resolve to reach it. I shall fail of my chief purpose on this occasion if the secret determination is not formed in the mind of more than one young man here to-night, and the secret purpose breathed to HIM unto whom all hearts are open, that, by his blessing on earnest endeavors, the place of DANIEL WEBSTER *shall be filled*.

It is deeply interesting to all of us to know that in the relations of son, and brother, husband, father, friend, and pupil, Mr. Webster earned a title to the highest commendation.

A gentleman of very high reputation, yet living, informed me that he resided with Mr. Webster in the village where he commenced the practice of law, about ten miles from his father's house—he says "I frequently went with him on Saturday afternoon to visit his parents and sisters. He was, beyond doubt, an affectionate son and brother. His presence ever seemed to light up joy in the family. I saw no other indication than that he was a dutiful, loving and beloved son

and brother. His love for his mother was enthusiastic, and that must have been from her mental and moral qualities, and not from her personal beauty. She was darker than Daniel ; she was very motherly and kind. His father was a venerable old man, a man of good, strong sense—Daniel ever seemed to venerate him. Daniel Webster always respected the authority of his parents.” I have seen the copy of a letter dated May the 18th, 1802, addressed to a very intimate friend and classmate, in which he enumerated the inducements that drew him towards the study of the law ; he says, “ Firstly and principally it is my father’s wish. He does not dictate, it is true, but how much short of dictation is the mere wish of a parent whose labors of life are wasted on favors to his children ? Even the delicacy with which the wish is expressed gives it more effect than it would have in the form of a command.” Mr. Webster says in a letter dated May the 3d, 1846, “ My father, Ebenezer Webster, born in Kingston, the lower part of the State, in 1739—the handsomest man I ever saw, except my brother Ezekiel, who appeared to me, and so does he now seem to me, the very finest human form that I ever laid eyes on. I saw him in his coffin—a white forehead, a tinged cheek, a complexion as clear as heavenly light ! But where am I straying ?”

“ The grave has closed upon him, as it has on all my brothers and sisters. We shall soon be all together. But this is melancholy and I leave it. Dear, dear kindred blood, how I love you all !”

* * * * *

“ Of a hot day in July—it must have been one of the last years of Washington’s administration—I was making hay with my father, just where I now see a remaining elm tree, about the middle of the afternoon. The Hon Abiel Foster, M. C., who lived in Canterbury, six miles off, called at the house, and came into the field to see my father. He was a worthy man, college learned, and had been a minister, but was not a person of any considerable natural powers. My father was his friend and supporter. He talked awhile in the field and went on his way. When he was gone, my father called me to him, and we sat down beneath the elm on a hay-cock. He said, ‘ My son, that is a worthy man—he is a member of Congress—he goes to Philadelphia and gets six dollars a day while I toil here. It is because he had an education which I never had. If I had had his early education, I should have been in Philadelphia in his place. I came near

it, as it was. But I missed it, and now I must work here.' 'My dear father,' said I, 'you shall not work. Brother and I will work for you, and wear our hands out, and you shall rest ;' and I remember to have cried ; and I cry now, at the recollection. 'My child,' said he, 'it is of no importance to me—I now live but for my children—I could not give your elder brother the advantages of knowledge, but I can do something for you. Exert yourself—improve your opportunities—*learn—learn*—and when I am gone you will not need to go through the hardships which I have undergone, and which have made me an old man before my time.'

I have more than once heard Mr. Webster express the most tender affection for the memory of his mother. He said that when he was a child his health was very delicate ; he was all *head*, and his parents thought he had the rickets ; his mother took him on horse-back alone down to the sea-side—about fifty miles—for the benefit of his health, finishing the narration with the inquiry, "Where do you find such mothers now?"

In a letter to a class-mate, dated December the 8th, 1801, he says, "Returning home after commencement, I found, on consideration, that it would be impossible for my father, under existing circumstances, to continue Ezekiel at college. Drained of all his little income by the expenses of my education thus far, and broken down in his exertions by some family occurrences, I saw he could not afford Ezekiel means to live abroad with ease and independence, and I knew too well the evils of penury to wish him to stay half beggard at college. I thought it therefore my duty to suffer some delay in my profession, for the sake of serving my elder brother, and was making a little interest in some places to the eastward for employment." His engagement at Fryeburg was the result of these efforts.

The eulogy upon his father's log cabin is familiar to you all. It was my good fortune to be present at Saratoga when it was delivered. He concludes this touching description of the former abode of his father and of his elder brothers and sisters,—“if ever I am ashamed of it, or if ever I fail in affection or veneration for him who reared it, and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and through the fire and blood of a seven years revolutionary war, shrunk from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice, to serve his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name and the name of my posterity be blotted from the memory of mankind.”

Although it would be easy and most gratifying to me to do so, I need dwell no longer upon the relation of a son and brother.

Mr. Webster was twice married. The first Mrs. Webster died at the house of an old and intimate friend of her husband and herself, in the city of New York, more than twenty years ago. I was not then personally acquainted with Mr. Webster, nor did I ever see his first wife; but I was intimately acquainted with the distinguished physician and worthy gentleman, since deceased, and his estimable lady, now living, at whose house Mrs. Webster was on a visit, accompanied by her husband, during her last illness, and where she died. From them I have learned that Mr. Webster was a tender and affectionate husband, and that his assiduous care of his wife, and his delicate attention to all her wants during her last illness, were not only of the most exemplary but touching character, such as none but a husband of warm affection, and refined sensibility, could have performed. With the present Mrs. Webster, an accomplished and excellent lady, I have long been acquainted, as with the honored wife of my friend. I can personally bear testimony that to her Mr. Webster was all that a faithful, devoted and indulgent husband should be. He was fond of her society—whether at home or traveling abroad, in his own country, or in foreign lands, he sought her companionship and never seemed entirely contented without it.

That Mr. Webster was ardently attached to his children, and indulgent, perhaps too indulgent, to all their wants, requires no proof; he had to regret, in common with all fathers devoted to the public service, and I know he did regret, that necessity compelled him often to be absent from his children, and prevented his giving their education his personal supervision. What his children have lost in this respect, his country gained.

I conclude this topic of my remarks by this inquiry—what highly distinguished man in this country, or elsewhere, springing from an undistinguished parentage, ever did so much to elevate his family, and do public honor to his kindred blood as Daniel Webster?

He was not content that his works should be given to the world without making it known that whatever honor these works might give him, he desired should be participated by his family. They are contained in six volumes. The first is dedicated to the daughters of his brother Ezekiel Webster, from a desire that the name of his brother might be associated with his, so long as anything written or spoken,

by him should be regarded or read. The third is dedicated to his dearly beloved wife, Caroline LeRoy Webster. The fourth is dedicated to his son Fletcher Webster, Esquire. The last volume is dedicated to the memory of his deceased children, Julia Webster Appleton, and Major Edward Webster.

The dedications themselves are among the finest effusions of genius and will embalm the names which are the subjects of them.

I propose next to speak of the character of Mr. Webster as a pupil and a student in college. For information on this point I am, of course, indebted to others, and I have sought it from the most authentic sources. A gentleman of high respectability, now living, writes me, under date of 8th January, inst., "Mr. Webster and myself were early acquainted. I entered the academy of Exeter, N. H., in July, 1796, and there found Daniel Webster, a lad of fourteen, engaged in English studies, grammar, arithmetic, &c., very modest and unassuming but attending closely to his books, and making the most of his time and opportunities; always prompt at recitations, and manifesting to his instructors that he understood the subject matter of lessons by his persevering industry and study."

"He did not mingle much with the young lads of his age, gentlemen's sons many of them, who had been favored with greater opportunities for education and refinement, and looked upon him as from the woods, as it were, and rather green, and thought more of their personal appearance and fine broadcloth, than of the improvement of the *mind*. It was perhaps impossible that he should not, at times, feel a little mortified at the treatment he would naturally meet with, from that class of companions. He left Exeter in the fall of 1796, and prosecuted his studies and fitted for college, with Dr. Wood, at Boscawen, N. H."

"I saw no more of Mr. Webster till July, 1798, when I left Exeter and entered the then Freshman Class at Dartmouth College, and found he had entered the same class the year before. From that time our intimacy increased during our college life, and I roomed with him in the Senior year. We corresponded afterwards till we were severally engaged in the business of our profession. I resided in the western part of New Hampshire, and Mr. Webster at Boscawen and Portsmouth, in the eastern part, while he remained in the State.

"Mr. Webster gave early promise of a great man, and evidence of a very superior intellect. It seemed never to be necessary for him to

apply himself so closely and laboriously, to become master of the subject of his researches, during the college studies, as was the case with most of us ; and still he would always appear to have a very correct and comprehensive view of the matter under consideration, and show that, either from reading, or from deep thought, or both, he had acquired the necessary and desired results. There was no one more correct and honorable in his feelings and general deportment than Mr. Webster. He was not particularly intimate with many, but in his friendships, professions and college associations, always sincere. His habit and manner of study was such, from his intuitive and comprehensive talent, that some have supposed he was not a *close* student. But he held that it was not the man who read the most hours, that was sure to be the most successful scholar."

An aged clergyman, who was also in college with Mr. Webster, has kindly communicated some facts in relation to his college life. From his letter, bearing date the 10th inst., I take the following extracts :—"I do fearlessly say that his whole college life, if you look upon him as a classic scholar, a friend to good order, and a close applicant, is certainly good and worthy to be imitated by any student who is permitted to grace the walls of our New England Colleges. Let me now specify. His habits of study were good—never knew him waste the study hours. He was constant to the recitation, and always well prepared.

* * * * *

"*He was peculiarly industrious.* In addition to his college studies I fully believe that he read more than any one of his classmates. He read with great rapidity, and remembered *all*. * * * * * In social life he was always pleasant. He always, apparently out of a sense of duty, attended public worship on the Sabbath. He was a strict observer of order, and his mind was too dignified to do otherwise. I should have as soon expected John Wheelock, the President, to have engaged in disorderly conduct as Daniel Webster. His rank was first in the class, so would four-fifths of the class say.

"I belonged to the same literary society with him, and, consequently often witnessed his powers as a debater. I am free to say that he far excelled. I am decided in the opinion that he then gave evidence of his future eminence.

"He far excelled in writing. He wrote rapidly and retained all

that he wrote. I have known him to commence writing a declamation after dinner, when he had to speak in the class at two o'clock, and in the midst of his writing the bell would ring ; he would go into the chapel and speak with remarkable ease. One instance may be mentioned when, just as he had done writing, a gale of wind took his paper off the table and carried it out of the window, and the last that was seen of it, it was going over the meeting house. He went into the chapel and spoke the same with his usual ease. I well recollect a poem which Mr. Webster spoke before the class which to me was a curiosity. Every line ended in *i o n*.

* * * * *

“I am aware that it is said he was no scholar. This comes from slanderers, who say “report” and we will report it. It is reported that he tore up and stamped on his Diploma. This is false. It is also reported that it was with difficulty that he obtained his degree. This is also false and proceeded from the tongue of slander. A difficulty arose in the class on account of the appointments for Commencement so that more than half of the class asked a dismissal from College. There was a compromise, and those disaffected were excused from speaking. Webster therefore did not speak.”

In reference to his habits of study in college, he once said to Professor Sanborn, of Hanover, N. H., in answer to the following observation made by the professor :—“Mr. Webster ! it is reported that you were an idle student, devoting more time to recreation than to study.” He replied, with great emphasis—“What fools they must be to suppose that man could make anything of himself without study. I have a mind,” he added, “to give you a chapter in my early history.” He then gave me substantially the same account which has often been published and need not be repeated here. He wished me to understand that he studied more hours and with more intense application than any other member of his class.

A gentleman to whom I have before referred, who resided with him at Boscawen soon after he first opened a law office, thus remarks, “He slept in a bed at his office, and more than half the winter, I slept in the same bed with him. He was then a most indefatigable student, at his books untiring. He, I might say, never went to bed before midnight. I know this to be so, for I was studying my classics at the same time, and occasionally availed myself of *his* knowledge.”

I am quite satisfied that any person who formed a judgment that Mr. Webster was not a hard student, at any period of his life, must have been led into an error from inferring that he could not study unless his eyes were on a book. I have known, personally, somewhat of his habits in later years of his life, and I may say that I never knew so hard a student. I have sometimes thought that any man who had the power of applying his mind to a subject as closely as Mr. Webster, and holding it as long under contemplation, could accomplish as much. He spared no pains, he withheld no labor in his preparations for great occasions. He followed out every train of thought connected with the subject under examination, and never advanced his propositions until they had been thoroughly examined. When roused, the mind of Mr. Webster was quick in apprehension—none more so, and with great rapidity he summoned his intellectual resources of ingenuity or acquirement, to the aid of his cause; but he never neglected thorough preparation from a reliance on his quickness of parts, or his genius. Hence his productions are finished productions, and will bear examination.

His extemporaneous speeches and arguments, and his written productions were thoroughly prepared in thought before he spoke or wrote, and he wrote with remarkable rapidity, and made very few corrections of his first draft. I have in my possession some very able documents prepared by him at a single sitting, and without alterations. When he was first Secretary of State, I happened to be at Washington soon after the appearance of an able letter written by him to the Mexican Minister. I made some inquiry about it, and he said, "I wrote that letter *there*," pointing to his desk, "at a single sitting." I remarked, "I suppose I understand that process, Mr. Webster! you had gone over and prepared the subject in your mind—the processes of thought were retained in your memory, and when you wrote you only copied." He acknowledged that I understood the matter correctly.

Of all the seasons of the day for intellectual employment, Mr. Webster preferred the morning. Oh! how he loved the morning; his spirit ascended to his Creator on the wings of the morning. Had he been a member of this college, he never would have been absent at morning prayer. When he returned from his last excursion through the State of New York, to which I shall have occasion to refer hereafter, I went to Albany to meet him. He had made arrangements to deliver a speech to the young men of that place. I left New York

the evening previous to the day on which the speech was to be delivered, and arrived at his hotel at a very early hour in the morning of that day. I found a servant stirring, and sent him to inquire whether Mr. Webster had arisen, and if he had, to present him my card. Very soon I received a summon to come up, and there I found him hard at work, with his papers before him, preparing his speech. "I have been up," said he, "since three o'clock, and I should like to know if you ever read poetry," and he then read the few lines of poetry with which that speech concluded; the ink being not yet dry with which they were written.

Will you allow me to read the conclusion of that noble speech, though not exactly in place?

"Gentlemen, a patriot President of the United States is the guardian, the protector, the friend of every citizen in them. He should be, and he is, no man's persecutor, no man's enemy, but the supporter and the protector of all and every citizen, so far as such support and protection depend on his faithful execution of the laws. But there is especially one great idea which Washington presents, and which governed him, and which should govern every man in high office, who means to resemble Washington: that is, the duty of preserving the Government itself; of suffering, so far as depends on him, no one branch to interfere with another, and no power to be assumed not belonging to each; and none abandoned which pertains to each; but to preserve it and carry it on unharmed for the benefit of the present and future generations.

"Gentlemen, a wise and prudent shipmaster makes it his first duty to preserve the vessel which carries him, and his passengers, and all that is committed to his charge; to keep her afloat, to conduct her to her destined port with entire security of property and life; that is his first object, and that should be the object, and is, of every Chief Magistrate of the United States, who has a proper appreciation of his duty. His first and highest duty is to preserve the Constitution which bears him, which sustains the Government, without which every thing goes to the bottom; to preserve that, and keep it, with the utmost of his ability and foresight, off the rocks and shoals, and away from the quick-sands; to accomplish this great end, he exercises the caution of the experienced navigator. He suffers nothing to betray his watchfulness, or to draw him aside from the great interest committed to his care; but is always awake, always solicitous, always anxious for the safety of the ship which is to carry him through the stormy seas.

" Though pleased to see the dolphins play,
 He minds his compass and his way ;
 And oft he throws the wary lead,
 To see what dangers may be hid :
 At helm he makes his reason sit,
 His crew of passions all submit.
 Thus, thus he steers his barque, and sails,
 On upright keel to meet the gales.

" Now, gentlemen, a patriot President, acting from the impulses of this high and honorable purpose, may reach what Washington reached. He may contribute to raise high the public prosperity, to help to fill up the measure of his country's glory and renown ; and he may be able to find a rich reward in the thankfulness of the people,

" And read his history in a nation's eyes."

This is a description of a patriot President, drawn by a son of New Hampshire—will you not, young gentlemen and fellow-citizens, with me, call upon another son of that same patriotic State, to give us a living exemplification of this portrait ? Allow us, honored sir, respectfully to remind you that the power which will soon be committed to your hands, is power received from the American people, in trust, under the Constitution of the United States, and that the objects of that Constitution are " to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the *general* welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to the people themselves, and their posterity ;" that political place, however exalted in itself, confers no honor upon its incumbent, but only affords an opportunity to a man of noble aims and patriotic purposes to connect his name with the glory of his native land.

But to return to the topic under consideration. It is not to be denied that Mr. Webster and his friends thought that the government of the college, in the distribution of its literary honors, did him injustice ; but that gave him no authority to rebel against that government—nor did he rebel—nor did he cherish ill-will towards that government ; but in process of time his assistance was required to preserve the very existence of his *alma mater*, and that assistance was cheerfully rendered by an intellectual effort never surpassed in the highest judicial tribunal of the land.

Here allow me to mention another trait in the character of Mr.

Webster. He never indulged feelings of hatred or revenge ; he was quick and ready to forgive injuries. This characteristic was exemplified in numerous instances in his private and his public life. He was a merciful man. To his servants and persons employed by him, no man could be more kind-hearted, considerate and generous. His hospitality was unbounded. In entertaining his guests, no man made himself more affable and agreeable. It would take me hours to relate all the pleasing anecdotes that have come to my knowledge in support of those statements.

But one consequence resulted from the disposition and habits of Mr. Webster, in these respects. He frequently found himself embarrassed in his pecuniary affairs, and unable to meet with promptness his engagements. This, it must be admitted, was an error, and finds no justification in the fact that other great and confessedly patriotic men in this country and in England have been chargeable with the same error. Mr. Webster never justified business defalcations of any sort, and he never failed to meet a pecuniary engagement of his own when he had the means, but, unfortunately for him, he did not always possess the means, and then he felt greatly distressed. How keenly he felt the obligation of paying his debts, may be illustrated by two well authenticated facts related of him. When he became convinced that he must die, he directed the superintendent of his farm to take five hundred dollars from his trunk and pay every debt due from him in the neighborhood, and recollecting that he had borrowed three hundred dollars of a friend in Plymouth, for which he had given no evidence of indebtedness, he called for a pen and ink, and being supported on his dying bed, he signed a check for the amount, that being the last time that he ever wrote his name. It was always a remarkable fact that those who most loudly censured Mr. Webster's short comings in the payment of his debts, were never numbered among his creditors, nor those who had suffered pecuniary loss by him.

In making this confession of the infirmity of our illustrious countryman, for such it was, and, frankly admitting that it was an alloy to some of his most attractive private virtues, with which it was intimately connected, allow me to say a word to the men of business in Wall Street, State Street, and elsewhere, who, most commendably, make it a point of honor and conscience, to satisfy, with exact punctuality, every pecuniary engagement. Mr. Webster discharged, as far

as man could discharge the great debt that he owed to his parents and his kindred blood—he paid twenty shillings on the pound and interest, of the claims of his *alma mater* for his moral and intellectual culture—he satisfied, to a large extent, the demands of humanity and friendship—he made ample returns to his native State for her early education and support—he repaid the commonwealth of his adoption for honors conferred upon him, by contributing to her prosperity and adding to her glory and renown—he answered the calls of patriotism by a life devoted to the service of his country. Now, my business countrymen, prosperous and honored as you are, I would not have you abate one jot of your punctuality in meeting your pecuniary engagements. I know and admit the necessity of such punctuality; but let me remind you that this is not the whole duty of man; there are other obligations in life as urgently imperative on you and me, in the estimation of all good men, and of God himself, as the payment of bills of exchange and promissory notes, on the third day of grace. While you do the one, neglect not the other, for if you do, you may find, too late, the end of your prosperity in a selfish, demoralized, corrupted community, and an enslaved country. “Thou canst not serve God and mammon.”

I pass from Mr. Webster’s private relations :

It is universally admitted that Mr. Webster was a man of extraordinary intellectual powers; many well-informed persons believe that in strength and vigor, and comprehensiveness of grasp, the mind of Mr. Webster was never surpassed. Some, professing the highest admiration of his intellectual powers, seem unwilling to go any farther in praise of Mr. Webster. It seems to me that mere intellect, how powerful soever, merits no praise, apart from the uses to which it is applied. Great, but mis-directed intellect, deserves censure rather than praise. A great mind, occupied in mere barren speculations, can hardly command respect. But who knows anything of Mr. Webster’s intellect except from its productions! Let us examine, then, these productions, in reference to the question—whether he is worthy of admiration only as an intellectual prodigy?

The public speeches, arguments, and State papers of Mr. Webster are before the public and well known. I shall examine some of them in the course of this discussion; but first let me speak of his intellectual exhibitions in the private and domestic circle. Mr. Webster possessed very remarkable powers of conversation. General Cass,

he sees the unexampled exhibition of female fortitude and resignation ; he hears the whisperings of youthful impatience ; he sees chilled and shivering childhood, houseless but for a mother's arms, couchless but for a mother's breast, till his blood almost freezes. The mild dignity of Carver and Bradford ; the decisive and soldier-like air and manner of Standish ; the devout Brewster ; the enterprising Allerton ; the general thoughtfulness of the whole band ; their conscious joy for dangers escaped ; their deep solicitude about dangers to come ; their trust in heaven ; their high religious faith, full of confidence and anticipation, are all grouped before him, filling him with reverence and admiration.

The reader is made intimately acquainted with the difficulties and dangers which these early settlers of New England were compelled to encounter ; he traces the progress of their principles through two centuries, and he beholds their development in the institutions of liberty under which we live, with all their concomitant blessings—nay, he is carried on through the century to come, and beholds the countless millions of these descendants of the pilgrims spreading from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and is made to unite in the welcome. “ Advance then ye future generations ! We would hail you, as you rise in your long succession, to fill the places which we now fill, and to taste the blessing of existence where we are passing and soon shall have passed, our own human duration. We bid you welcome to this pleasant land of the fathers. We bid you welcome to the healthful skies and the verdant fields of New England. We greet your accession to the great inheritance which we have enjoyed. We welcome you to the blessings of good government and religious liberty. We welcome you to the treasures of science and the delights of learning. We welcome you to the transcendent sweets of domestic life, to the happiness of kindred, and parents, and children. We welcome you to the immeasurable blessings of rational existence, the immortal hope of Christianity, and the light of everlasting truth.”

On arising from the perusal of this oration, we feel indeed the results of a highly intellectual power, for we have been made to think and to reason, and thus our minds have been strengthened and expanded, and our hearts have been animated with the highest and noblest feelings and purposes.

In further illustration of Mr. Webster's peculiar power in drawing the attention of his hearers to the subject under discussion, to the ex-

clusion of every thing else, I would relate two anecdotes. Some years ago a merchant of more than ordinary intelligence and discrimination, represented a congressional district in the vicinity of New York, in the House of Representatives of the United States. Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster were then members of the House. He remarked that when Clay made an effort on the floor, it was a common occurrence for members to bestow the highest praises upon his manner, his gallant bearing, his extraordinary mental powers, and personal attractions. When Mr. Webster spoke, the manifestation of approval would assume a different form—profound and thoughtful attention would be given while he spoke, and when he was through, expressions like these would be heard.—Well ! I think Webster has proved his case—he has put the subject in a new light, and I cannot see how he can be answered. In the one case, admiration was expressed for the man ; in the other, conviction was yielded to the argument.

Again—a few years ago, a gentleman of the bar, distinguished for his great learning and logical powers, requested me to accompany him to Boston, to hear a speech to be pronounced by Mr. Webster, in Faneuil Hall. It was in the summer season, after a long session of Congress, during the administration of Mr. Van Buren. The occasion was a public dinner given to Mr. Webster.

We heard Mr. Webster's speech ; he was laboring under his autumnal attack of catarrh. After he had closed, I said to my friend, " Well ! how did you like him ? " He answered—" I confess I am a little disappointed, although the speech was a very good one." I remarked, in reply, that I thought I had heard Mr. Webster to better advantage—" but how long do you think he spoke ? " He said " about three-quarters of an hour." It was an hour and a-half by the watch—I timed the speech. Here then was a great compliment unwittingly paid. I have never known any speaker who had, to the same extent as Mr. Webster, the power of putting the mind of his hearers in close and intimate connection with the subject under discussion.

In the year 1826 a very extraordinary event occurred in this country. On the anniversary of the National Independence, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, two distinguished citizens, both of whom were members of the Committee which prepared and reported the Declaration of Independence, both had filled the office of President of the United States, departed this life. The event was one deemed worthy of an extraordinary commemoration throughout the country. Our

most distinguished orators became public eulogists of the illustrious deceased. Mr. Webster was requested, by his neighbors in Boston, to perform this office. He willingly complied with that request. His oration is before the world, and its superiority to every other pronounced on that occasion, is as manifest as the light. He not only surpassed every other eulogist, but, by a remarkably appropriate and felicitous conception, he made himself a member of the Congress which, on behalf of the American people, issued the Declaration of Independence, and put into the mouth of John Adams, the great debater of the Assembly, a speech as remarkable in its way as the ever memorable declaration itself. If any member of that body, or of any other deliberative or popular assembly, during the excitement of the revolutionary struggle made a speech more distinguished for ardent patriotism, and stirring eloquence than this, the record of that speech has not come down to us.

It would seem that Mr. Webster in this speech labored successfully to exemplify his own just and graphic description of eloquence.

"True eloquence," said he, "indeed, does not consist in speech. It cannot be brought from far. Labor and learning may toil for it, but they will toil in vain. Words and phrases may be marshalled in every way, but they cannot compass it. It must exist in the man, in the subject and in the occasion. Affected passion, intense expression, the pomp of declamation, all may aspire to it; they cannot reach it. It comes, if it come at all, like the outbreking of a fountain from the earth, or the bursting forth of volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original native force. The graces taught in the schools, the costly ornaments and studied contrivances of speech, shock and disgust men, when their own lives, and the fates of their wives, their children, and their country hang on the decision of the hour. Then words have lost their power, rhetoric is vain, and all elaborate oratory contemptible. Even genius itself feels rebuked and subdued as in the presence of higher qualities. Then patriotism is eloquent; then self-devotion is eloquent. The clear conception, outrunning the deductions of logic, the high purpose, the firm resolve, the dauntless spirit, speaking on the tongue, beaming in the eye, informing every feature, and urging the whole man onward, right onward to his object—this, this is eloquence."

Wherever, on the great national jubilee, the declaration of Independence is read to warm the patriotism of our countrymen, there should be read the speech of John Adams, prepared by Daniel Webster, in support of that declaration.

I pass, for want of time, the orations delivered on Bunker Hill on the occasion of laying the corner stone, and completion of the monument. They will give a renown to that monument far more enduring than the granite of which it is constructed. For the same reason I cannot stop to dwell upon that noble tribute to his native State, and her patriotic, brave and hardy population, contained in his address to the sons of New Hampshire. Nor can I even enumerate the other speeches made by Mr. Webster in commemorating the landing of the pilgrims, all differing, all eloquent, all fraught with the noblest sentiments. But I may be permitted to say that no one of her sons has described the natural scenery of New England so graphically, her peculiar institutions and her mental and moral characteristics with such just discrimination, and commended them with so much filial feeling and enthusiasm. His genius has shed its selectest influence over every spot consecrated in the affections of New England. If that genius has imparted any glory, it has been made to illuminate the land of the pilgrims.

On this point allow me give one extract from a speech made in Faneuil Hall, in 1828, when John Quincy Adams was President of the United States.

“It cannot have escaped the notice of any gentleman present, that in the course of the controversy, pains have been taken to affect the character and success of the present chief magistrate, by exciting odium towards that part of the country in which he was born and to which he belongs. Sneers, contumely, reproach, every thing that gentlemen could say, and many things which gentlemen could not say, have been uttered against New England. I am sure, sir, every true son of New England must receive such things, when they come from sources which ought to be considered respectable, with a feeling of just indignation ; and when proceeding from elsewhere, with contempt. If there be one among ourselves, who can be induced, by any motives, to join in this cry against New England, he disgraces the New England mother who bore him, the New England father who bred and nurtured him, and the New England atmosphere which first supplied respiration to those lungs now so unworthily employed in uttering calumnies against his country. Persons not known till yesterday, and having little chance of being remembered beyond to-morrow, have affected to draw a distinction between the patriot States and the States of New England ; assigning the last to the present President,

and the rest to his rival. I do not wonder, sir, at the indignation and scorn which I perceive the recital of this injustice produces here. Nothing else was to be expected. Faneuil Hall is not a place where one is expected to hear with indifference that New England is not to be counted among the patriot States. The patriot States ! What State was it, sir, that was patriotic, when patriotism cost something ? Where but in New England did the great drama of the Revolution open ? Where, but on the soil of Massachusetts, was the first blood poured out in the cause of liberty and independence ? Where, sooner than here—where, earlier than within the walls which now surround us, was patriotism to be found, when to be patriotic was to endanger houses and homes, and wives and children, and to be ready also to pay for the reputation of patriotism by the sacrifice of blood and of life ?”

Before I leave this topic, I hope to be pardoned a few plain remarks.

If the spirit of my dear departed friend is permitted to take cognizance of what occurs here to-night, it will not, I am sure, hear what I have to say with displeasure. If the pilgrim fathers admired, and I know they admired, high intellect, combined with an intelligent, firm, and undying attachment to their principles ; if they had the courage, and they never wanted physical or moral courage to uphold efficiently and zealously one of their own number, possessing in a pre-eminent degree these characteristics, then have their present descendants sadly degenerated. Nothing will more astonish posterity than the fact, that the sons of the pilgrims inhabiting New England, and scattered in vast multitudes all over this widely extended country, possessing more intelligence, more power, more wealth, more influence, by far, than any other body or race of men in the Republic, have permitted such a man as Daniel Webster, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, and the greatest living exponent of their inherited principles—in his own day and generation unsurpassed in patriotism, first in statesmanship, first in experience, and confessedly first in intellect, to pass from the stage of life, at the age of three-score years and ten, without having been first in political position.

But it would be a signal injustice to the memory of our departed countryman to say that he labored more to promote the honor and renown of New England than of the United States of America. His patriotism was large and comprehensive enough to embrace the whole

country. His public life was spent in the service of the nation. The mottoes—"the country—the whole country, and nothing but the country"—"Union and liberty, now and forever, one and inseparable," expressed the sentiments which uniformly animated him in the discharge of his political duties. Nor were his actions inconsistent with those sentiments.

The story of the American Revolution, as sketched by Webster in his various productions, with the portraits of the principal actors in the drama, as drawn by him, is as interesting as an epic poem. Nor are his praise and admiration withheld from eminent citizens who have served their country, though not of New England; Washington, Hamilton, Madison, Jay and Marshall have not been postponed in his regards, or his commendation, to any sons of the pilgrims. Indeed at the hands of no man, in his own time, or since, at home, or abroad, has the father of his country—the man of his age—received so large a measure of justice as at the hands of Daniel Webster. It is gratifying to the friends of Mr. Webster to compare his efforts on a subject, worthy of the highest intellectual and moral powers, with those of other distinguished men put forth on the same subject.

Mr. Webster had the sagacity to see that great as was the reputation of Washington for his deeds in arms, his patriotism, his fortitude, his foresight, his whole conduct as the leader of the revolutionary armies, yet his chief merit was as a civilian. I know that he admired, revered, and almost adored the father of his country for the public services performed by him after the peace of '83. When that peace was negotiated, and our independence as one of the nations of the earth acknowledged, then commenced a controversy, as to the formation of a new government, more important in its results than the conflict between the colonies and the crown of Great Britain. This controversy was maintained through a series of years, and, at times, the result was quite as doubtful, and gave Washington as much anxiety as he ever felt in the darkest hours of the Revolution. In 1786, he says:—"No morn ever dawned more favorably than our's did—and no day was ever more clouded than the present. Wisdom and good examples are necessary at this time to rescue the political machine from the impending storm." Again—"How melancholy is the reflection, that in so short a time we should have made such large strides towards fulfilling the prediction of our transatlantic foes! 'Leave them to themselves and their government will soon dissolve.' Will not the wise and good strive to avert this evil? Or will their supineness suffer ignorance, and the arts of self-interested, designing,

disaffected and desperate characters, to involve this country in wretchedness and contempt." Had these characters succeeded—his prediction would have been realized:—"Thirteen sovereignties pulling against each other, and all tugging at the federal head—will soon bring ruin on the whole." But they did not succeed. Washington led the opposing host, and he was again the victor.

This was the victory that Daniel Webster delighted to celebrate ; the successful combatants in this civil strife were the cherished objects of his admiration and regards ; to them he considered the country, and the friends of liberty every where, under the deepest obligation ; in their praise he was always eloquent. They gave us the Union, and the Constitution, and without Union and the Constitution what would have the Revolution been worth ? It would have been worse than nothing. The result of the war would have been more disastrous than our former condition.

The history of this country between the peace of '83 down to the close of Washington's administration, was, in the judgment of Mr. Webster, of all others the most interesting and instructive to the American people, and it was his intention to write that history himself. He had, for some time, meditated this work, and he was fully prepared to perform it, as soon as his official term had expired.

By the aid of Washington the Constitution was made and adopted—under his administration it was put in successful operation. But this was not enough—nor was it enough that Washington had committed, in the most solemn and affecting manner, the guardianship of the Union to the American people, as the great palladium of their liberty, nor that its beneficent results had outstripped the predictions of its most sanguine advocates. Patriotism had yet a work to perform in defending and preserving it. Opponents of the Constitution were found who professed to see defects in it which rendered its preservation not desirable ; and who, unless its provisions could be executed according to their construction of their intent and meaning, were willing to see the United Government abolished. Such men there have been—numerous, active and influential, but they found in Daniel Webster, while he lived, an opponent always able to refute their arguments, demolish their theories, and defeat their purposes.

Daniel Webster was the son of a revolutionary soldier—a contemporary of Washington—like him, the father of Webster was born a British subject, like him he had periled his life for his king. Like Washington in the maturity of his years, and in the ripeness of his judgment, appealing to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for the rectitude of his

intentions, he had cast off his allegiance to his king, and taken arms against his government. In the revolutionary war, under the command of Washington, he had often periled his life for his country. His soul was imbued with the principles of Washington, whom he admired above all other men. He believed in God and Washington. Washington was for the Union—and so was the father of Daniel Webster—Washington presided in the Convention that formed the Constitution, and recommended it to the adoption of the American people, and Captain Webster was for it, mind, heart and soul. He hated tyranny ; he loved liberty, he loved his country, and this hatred and these loves he imparted to his children ; they were received into the heart of young Daniel as seed sown in a rich soil, destined to bring forth an abundant harvest. Often during the long winter evenings, around the domestic hearth, had the veteran soldier related the story of his perils, his privations, and his sufferings ; often had he dwelt with enthusiasm on the character of his great chief, the leader of the American army. Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture what was the appearance of the young statesman when he heard his venerated father tell of the wars, the old French war, and the “ last war,” and heard him dilate on the character of Washington. Methinks I hear the quick and strong pulsations of his heart, and see his big eye glowing, his lip curled, and his fist clenched.

The following apostrophe is taken from a poetical epistle written by Mr. Webster in February, 1801, a little more than a year after the decease of Washington :

“ Ah ! Washington, thou once didst guide the helm,
 And point each danger to our infant realm,
 Didst show the gulf, where factious tempests sweep,
 And the big thunders frolic o’er the deep,
 Through the red wave did lead our barque, nor stood
 Like Moses, on the other side the flood.
 But thou art gone—yes gone, and we deplore
 The man—the Washington we knew before.
 But when thy spirit mounted to the sky,
 And scarce beneath thee left a tearless eye,
 Tell—what Elisha then thy mantle caught,
 Warmed with thy virtue, with thy wisdom fraught.”

Soon he was taught that the result of the contest was the new Constitution ; that was the conclusion of the whole matter. In that were garnered up all the trophies that valor, patriotism and wisdom had won ; that was to form a more perfect union, and perpetuate the blessings of liberty, and to that Constitution his heart clung as to a cherished object of affection.

With a mind and heart imbued with these opinions and feelings, Daniel Webster grew up to manhood. Passing over, for the present, his academic life, and his brilliant career in the House of Representatives, we find him in the Senate of the United States. Here he was compelled to encounter the powerful advocates of the doctrine put forth by one of the Sovereign States of the Union, by which the authority was claimed for a State to declare a law of Congress null and void. This doctrine was advocated on the floor of the Senate, in a speech distinguished by great ability; a speech which not only attacked the Constitutional principles which Mr. Webster had learned in the school of Washington, but assailed with bold invective the inhabitants of New England, and especially of Massachusetts. The speech demanded an answer—that answer must come from Mr. Webster. The eyes of the whole country were turned to him. He was peculiarly situated; it happened that at the time he had a professional engagement in the Supreme Court of the United States, to argue a cause of great magnitude and importance for the State of New York. He was acting, too, with a party composed of persons drawn from both the old political organizations. Their views upon constitutional questions were supposed to differ. He might deter his professional engagement, but how he should be able to speak out with boldness his known views on the great constitutional question under discussion, without giving offense to some of his political associates, was not easily seen. In this emergency on the morning of the day when his reply was to be made, he consulted an old friend who had formerly been attached to the Republican party, and made known to him his embarrassment, stating that if he said anything he must declare his own views which were well known. This friend, who was Mr. Bell, of New Hampshire, encouraged him to proceed in his own way, saying it was time the truth should be told. "Then," said Mr. Webster, "by the blessing of God, it shall be told this day." The speech was made, and we all know the result. Never was the theory of the Constitution more clearly declared, and nothing could be more overwhelming than the argument opposed to nullification. Nor did he forget to repel the attack upon New England, while he failed not to render all due honor to the past history, and the distinguished men of the State whose representative made the assault. The political heresy of nullification was prostrated by this single blow—never, I hope, to rise again. The Constitution may be overthrown by open rebellion, but never paralyzed by the exercise of powers conferred or authorized by itself. For this service Mr. Webster received unmeasured praise

from all the free States, and great numbers of persons residing in the slave-holding States.

But time rolled on through twenty years, and another crisis arises: again the Union is threatened with dissolution. This state of things had been produced by a course of measures in Congress, which Mr. Webster had steadily and resolutely resisted. But resistance was in vain, and the disastrous result is now seen and felt in angry, and apparently irreconcilable sectional strife. What shall be done? That there was real and imminent danger, the most experienced, able, and patriotic members of Congress, attached to both political parties, admitted, and proclaimed. Who shall allay this strife? Again the eyes of the whole country are turned to Webster with intense anxiety. He seems reluctant to break silence, preferring that the desired result should be brought about by others. He hesitates, because he knows that, this time, it will be necessary that multitudes at the north, who had forgotten their obligations to the Constitution, should be rebuked, and he would fain be excused from administering that rebuke. But peace comes not, the passions of men become more and more exasperated, and preparations are contemplated for a conflict of arms. Sense of duty will not permit him longer to remain silent, and on the 7th of March, 1850, Mr. Webster made his speech not less celebrated than that in reply to General Hayne. The effect of this speech was favorable upon the country, but it brought upon its author such a storm of indignation as he had never before experienced. Of this production I mean to say nothing in commendation, at this time, but of this I am as fully satisfied as I can be, of any fact which none but the Searcher of Hearts can certainly know, that in delivering it Mr. Webster was impelled by the highest sense of duty. What he said was the result of the most profound meditation: he knew precisely what he uttered: he understood the full import of every proposition advanced, and the whole had the sanction, not only of his judgment, but his conscience. Nor did subsequent reflection, after he had learned all the objections to his course, bring with it any regrets. In the legislative action required to pass the Compromise Measures, and give them the force of law, Mr. Webster co-operated with others, and indeed followed the lead of others. Whose individual exertion, where so many distinguished men exerted themselves, was most powerful in bringing about this result, it may be difficult to decide. But, after the measures became laws, there was yet a work to perform, and in this work Mr. Webster's individual exertions and influence far exceeded those of any other man in the country. Here he stood with-

out a rival : none could compete with him. This consisted in reconciling the people to the laws which their representatives had passed. To one of these laws resistance was proclaimed—such resistance, it was declared, was not only justified but demanded by the laws of God himself. Under these circumstances, it became highly expedient that the law should be upheld by public sentiment—that sentiment required to be enlightened, and reasoned with. Mr. Webster came directly before the people, and to them he made his appeals. He found and made occasions to address letters, and prepare other documents designed for publication, which were circulated by the public press of the country. He travelled through the State of New York, and addressed the people assembled in large masses, at favorable points, along the great highways of the State. Never, on any occasions, were Mr. Webster's addresses more earnest, and eloquent : never more elaborately prepared. The speeches at Buffalo and Albany were unsurpassed by any similar efforts of his own. With what admiration, mixed with wonder, do we contemplate our departed friend, on the verge of three score years and ten, under the pressure of disease, standing, for two hours, at Buffalo, in the open air, drenched with rain, arguing, pleading with his assembled countrymen in strains of eloquence never surpassed by Demosthenes. Read that speech at Buffalo, my young friends—it is one of the finest models that you can study.

I may as well in this place, speak of the manner in which Mr. Webster was accustomed to address popular assemblies : it is well worthy of imitation. His preparation for such addresses was as thorough and elaborate as for addresses to the Senate, or the Supreme Court of the United States. He never aimed to amuse his auditors ; but he sought their instruction. His deference and respect for the popular tribunal, seemed as great as that which he uniformly manifested for the senators or the Courts of law. I remember on one occasion to have visited, in company with Mr. Webster and others, some manufacturing establishments in the State of New Jersey. When the workmen had a recess for dinner, many of them came, in their working costume, to see him, and Mr. Webster was requested to address them from the balcony of the hotel : he did so for three quarters of an hour, giving utterance, in pure and simple English, to great truths, which it concerned them, as men and citizens, to know. What he said was listened to with profound attention, evidently understood and fully appreciated. His hearers, to the number of about four hundred, departed with a feeling of self-respect, arising from the fact,

that they had received, from a distinguished person, not flattery, but the respect due to them as men and republicans.

In the year 1837, Mr. Webster visited the Western States for the purpose of making himself more thoroughly acquainted with the inhabitants of those States and their resources. He was met and greeted on the route by large masses of citizens, and his addresses to them were frequent. It was at this time, when seeing the reports of these addresses, that the venerable John Quincy Adams remarked to a friend, that Webster was doing more good than any man in the country. Indeed it may well be questioned whether any public man, whose desire is to preserve the institutions of the country, can do more good than to make plain, well considered, oral addresses to the people themselves on political subjects. But efforts of this sort can never succeed unless he who makes them deals honestly and fairly with his subject; like Mr. Webster he must state facts truly, and reason ingenuously, with an evident desire to arrive at the truth. In speaking of Mr. Webster as a debater, his great rival, Calhoun, remarked to Mr. Bayly, a member of the House of Representatives, from Virginia, that he was remarkable in this, that he always stated the argument of his opponent fairly and boldly met it. He had even seen him state the argument of his opponent more forcibly than his opponent had stated it himself, and if he could not answer it, he would never undertake to weaken it by his representation. Mr. Webster, more than any statesman of his day or generation, may be regarded as a great public instructor. He instructed his own profession, he exhorted young men in College—hear him discourse to the students of South Carolina College:—

“Let me say to each of you, “*Carpe Diem*,” art is long, and science profound; and literature in our day is various and extensive. But you have youth and health and the means of culture and improvement, and can accomplish great objects. With you it is the bright and breezy morn of life. A long day, I trust, is before you. Let me advise you to be early in prosecuting the great work, which in that day is to be done. Like the morning of the natural day, let the morning of life begin with devotion to the Great Giver of all good, and let every succeeding hour of that life be filled with acts of duty and friendship, and private and public beneficence. The evening of such life will be full of hopes for a better, and all will be cheered and consoled by

“ ——— that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends

“Young gentlemen, all my good wishes attend you! May you here sow, with liberal broadcast, the seeds of a future harvest of honor to yourselves, gratification to your friends, and usefulness to your country.”

He instructed his fellow-citizens in their political rights and civil duties—he instructed states and nations in the law which should govern their intercourse with each other; and through all his instruction, there is an infusion of high-toned morality—Christian morality. Nor in communicating instruction did he overlook the sex, which he honored, as he honored his own mother, to whose maternal tenderness and early teachings, he acknowledged himself chiefly indebted for whatever excellencies were found in his own character, and whatever eminence among his fellow-men his exertions enabled him to attain. No man knew better than himself, the obligations which American liberty was under to the mothers and wives, and sisters, who sent forth their sons, their husbands, and their brothers to suffer hunger and cold, and nakedness—the privation of every domestic comfort, and meet death itself, in the Revolutionary contest; regretting to part with them, hoping to meet them again, but desiring above all things, that they should acquit themselves like freemen, and willing to see their faces no more for ever, if the cause of Independence and Liberty required the sacrifice of their lives.

Hear him discourse to the ladies of Richmond, Virginia :—“If we draw within the circle of our contemplation the mothers of a civilized nation, what do we see? We behold so many artificers working, not on frail and perishable matter, but on the immortal mind, moulding and fashioning beings who are to exist forever. We applaud the artist whose skill and genius present the mimic man upon the canvas; we admire and celebrate the sculptor who works out the same image in enduring marble; but how insignificant are these achievements, though the highest and the fairest in all the departments of art, in comparison with the great vocation of human mothers! They work not upon the canvas that shall fade, or the marble that shall crumble into dust, but upon mind, upon spirit, which is to last forever, and which is to bear, for good or evil, throughout its duration, the impress of a mother’s plastic hand.”

Will the ladies present allow me to commend to their perusal and study the whole of this noble address, which treats their sex not as triflers, demanding only from man expressions of admiration for their charms, but as immortal beings who have important duties to perform, and high responsibilities to discharge.

It is fortunate for mankind that the lessons of wisdom inculcated by Mr. Webster are on record ; that this record has been made up under his own supervision. It cannot be obliterated or altered—the world has it ; by that record he will be judged ; and to that judgment I know that Daniel Webster looked forward with calmness and with confidence. However he might be regarded by his contemporaries, he believed that posterity would do him justice.

I cannot but think that in the colleges and halls of learning of his native land, there ought to be cherished for the memory of Daniel Webster a feeling of gratitude, not entertained for any statesman among the living or the dead. In a country where eloquence is destined, through all time, to exert a powerful influence, and the attainment of it to be one of the highest objects of ambition, he has, by unwearied study, and the exercise of the most exquisite taste, furnished models of this noble art—models by which coming generations of American citizens will be taught how to think clearly, reason fairly, and clothe thought in the purest and simplest English. It is glory enough for every American that Webster's language is his native tongue.

The great annual celebration of this time-honored institution, a century hence, will, I doubt not, find her ample halls crowded with the votaries of learning. If then permission should be granted to those among the illustrious dead, whose works had been most carefully preserved here, and whose memory had here been cherished with the fondest admiration, to be present at the scene, clothed in their mortal habiliments, we may well suppose that eager curiosity would first seek out among the vast multitude, Demosthenes, and Cicero, and Webster, even before the cry was heard—where are Homer, and Virgil, and Milton ?

But the claims of Mr. Webster to the gratitude of his country rest on other services than those to which I have referred. He was connected, for a few years, under two appointments, with the Executive department of the Governments. Here he had an opportunity of showing his administrative ability, and if no other records remained of Mr. Webster's public services, than those to be found in the department of State, there would be sufficient to place him among the most distinguished statesmen of his country, and the most renowned publicists of the world.

In conducting the foreign relations of the country, he constantly aimed to accomplish two great leading objects :

1st. The maintenance of peace ; honorable peace with all nations.

2d. To cause his country to be regarded as one of the great nations of the world, and respected, honored and feared as such.

What he did in furtherance of these objects, is well known, and need not here be specified, especially what he did to establish peace between this country and Great Britain, upon a firm and enduring foundation, by the adjustment of existing controversies, and removing all causes of discord and hostility. The treaty of Washington was negotiated between Mr. Webster and Lord Ashburton. By this treaty the north-eastern boundary of the country was fairly and satisfactorily settled ; proper satisfaction and apology were obtained for an aggression on the soil and territory of the United States ; proper and safe stipulations were entered into for the fulfillment of the duty of this Government, and for meeting the earnest desire of the people in suppressing the slave trade ; in pursuance of these stipulations, a degree of success in the attainment of that object was reached wholly unknown before ; crimes, disturbing the peace of the two nations, were suppressed ; the safety of the Southern coasting trade was secured ; impressment of seamen was struck out of the list of contested questions among the nations, and finally, and more than all, much was done to add lustre to the American name and character.

The letter to M. Hulsemann was extensively read abroad, and it made known to the governments and people of Europe, more than any state paper ever issued before had done, the resources and power of the great Republic of the world. Millions were then reminded, and many for the first time learned, that “ the power of this republic, at the present moment, is spread over a region, one of the richest and most fertile on the globe, and of an extent in comparison with which the possessions of the House of Hapsburg are but as a patch on the earth’s surface. Its population, already twenty-five millions, will exceed that of the Austrian Empire within the period during which it may be hoped that M. Hulsemann may yet remain in the honorable discharge of his duties to his government. Its navigation and commerce are hardly exceeded by the oldest and most commercial nations ; its maritime means, and its maritime power, may be seen by Austria herself, in all the seas where she has ports, as well as it may be seen also in other quarters of the globe. Life, liberty, property, and all personal rights are amply secured to all citizens and protected by just and stable laws ; and credit, public and private, is as well established as in any government in Continental Europe. And the country, in all its interests and concerns, partakes most largely in all the improvements and progress which distinguish the age. Certainly the United States may be pardoned, even

by those who profess adherence to the principles of absolute governments, if they entertain an ardent affection for those popular forms of political organization which have so rapidly advanced their own prosperity and happiness, and enabled them in so short a period to bring their country, and hemisphere to which it belongs, to the notice and respectful regard, not to say admiration, of the civilized world." That masterly document, which may be called official, and which has been translated in many of the languages of Europe, 'Mr. Webster's address on laying the corner stone of the enlarged capitol of the United States,' was prepared for a like purpose as the letter to M. Hulsemann. It may be truly said that the government of the United States, and the true character and tendency of our institutions, were never so well known and so highly honored and respected, throughout the civilized and uncivilized world, as at this moment : and that Mr. Webster has contributed more largely to this result than any one of his cotemporaries. This is something to say for the son of a New England farmer, whose eyes first opened upon the light of day amid the snow drifts of New Hampshire, seventy-one years ago this day.

The practical ability and efficiency of Mr. Webster as an administrative officer can not be fully learned from his official dispatches as Secretary of State ; they can be known by those only whose intercourse with him, officially, made them acquainted with his admirable tact, address, industry and skill in the management of negotiations, and dispatching the business of the State Department. It has been thought by many of Mr. Webster's most intimate and intelligent friends, that his ability as an executive officer of the Government surpassed his ability as a Senator and oral debater.

I now proceed to consider another topic.

The doctrine always avowed by political conventions, of entire and unhesitating belief that the people are capable of self-government, was heartily embraced by Mr. Webster, without any mental reservation. It requires very little sagacity to see that if this proposition is not true, the experiment of Republican Government must fail, and the question is only one of time when this disastrous result shall be made manifest.

This faith of Mr. Webster's was not one without works ; it was a living, active faith. He believed, too, that a majority of the people had a right to govern. No statesman in our country ever did so much to establish principles by which the judgment of a majority should be fully ascertained and fairly expressed. His own habit, as has been shown, was, whenever it was practicable, to appeal directly to the people, in

the employment of fair arguments, and by a candid statement of the case. That the people themselves were gratified by this mode of proceeding is shown by the undeniable fact, that no public man in the country, during a long course of years, ever drew audiences to hear him speak, so numerous as those who waited on Mr. Webster. The speeches of no other man were ever published by the press of the country with so much alacrity, and read with so much avidity. He sought, too, to keep the channels open and clear through which the public sentiment ordinarily flowed. That the will of the majority should be obeyed, every republican professes to believe, but how that will shall be ascertained, so as to secure the admitted right of the majority, is a problem of difficult solution, in the practical working of our popular systems. That fraud and intrigue are constantly at work to make that appear to be the sense of the community which never received the approbation of the majority, is well known. In justification of such proceedings, the principle, after being long acted upon without avowal, has been unblushingly proclaimed that "all is fair in politics." This principle has received the scorching rebuke of Mr. Webster, as has every other principle, and every practice in our country, designed or calculated to defeat a fair expression of the popular will. He has labored, too, more than any other public man, to have that will directed by right principle. The elective franchise, as he has shown, rightly viewed, is a trust in the hands of every citizen entitled to exercise it. He may have the power, but he has not the right to exercise this franchise capriciously, to gratify his private whims, or partialities, or antipathies, but he is bound to exercise it for the benefit of the whole community. He has endeavored, by the whole force of his talent, to work this principle into the public mind, and call to its support the public conscience, wisely judging that right principle, in morals or in politics, which are a part of morals, is the source of right action.

In his last speech delivered on the floor of the Senate, he exposed the fallacy of the pernicious doctrine that the representative is bound to sacrifice his own will and judgment, and speak the will of his constituents. Who were his own constituents as a Senator? The people of Massachusetts—but he held to the doctrine that as a senator of the United States, he was entrusted with the interests of the whole people of the United States; he was under obligations to seek, by all that he did, not the welfare and prosperity of a part only, but of the whole.

In the State of Rhode Island, an attempt was made, a few years

ago, to collect the sense of the people, by an unorganized assembly, without the forms of law, but Mr. Webster showed that the proceeding was contrary to American Republican usage. That by this usage there must be a regular action of popular power, that such action placed upon Republican liberty the most beautiful face that ever adorned her angel form. All was regular and harmonious in its features, and gentle in its operation. The stream of public authority, under American liberty, running in this channel, has the strength of the Missouri, while its waters are as transparent as a crystal lake. It is powerful for good. It produces no tumult, no violence and no wrong :

“ Though deep, yet clear—though gentle, yet not dull ;
Strong without rage—without o’erflowing, full.”

Yet, after all, what is popular liberty itself, without restraints which the people are willing to impose on themselves. Whence come these restraints, but from intelligence to see their necessity, and moral and religious sentiment to guide that intelligence ? What man has ever more insisted upon the cultivation of the sentiment inspired by morality and religion, as essential to the preservation of liberty, than Mr. Webster ? Almost every page of his voluminous works is radiant with such teachings.

Nor has his practice been inconsistent with these precepts. He has insisted always upon good faith and just dealing in all the transactions between State and State, and nation and nation.

The just, clear, and profound views of American liberty, entertained by Mr. Webster, and his strenuous and enlightened efforts to guard the foundations of that liberty, and to support and rear yet higher its superstructure, constitute his glory as a statesman.

It is proper that I should speak of Mr. Webster as a member of the bar. Before he decided to pursue the profession of the law, he deliberated profoundly on the subject, and he thus concludes a letter to a friend, written when he was twenty years old :—“ If I prosecute the profession, I pray God to fortify me against its temptations. To the winds I dismiss those light hopes of eminence which ambition inspired, and vanity fostered. To be ‘ honest, to be capable, to be faithful ’ to my client and to my conscience, I earnestly hope will be my first endeavor. I believe you, my worthy boy, when you tell me what are your intentions. I have long known and loved the honesty of your heart. But let us not rely too much on ourselves—let us look to some less fallible guide to direct us among the temptations that surround us.”

Before the Charleston Bar, in 1847, he said—" Let me say, gentlemen, that I love our common profession, and I love all who honor it. I regard it as the ornament, and one of the chief defenses and securities of free institutions. It is indispensable to, and conservative of public liberty. I honor it from the bottom of my heart. If I am any thing, it is the law—that noble profession, that sublime science which we all pursue—that has made me what I am. The law has been my chief stimulus, my controlling and abiding hope, nay, I might almost say, my presiding genius and guardian angel."

I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Webster is more indebted to the mental training and discipline of the bar, for his eminence as a logician, and a debater, than to any other cause whatever. There is no profession or calling that so thoroughly disciplines the intellectual powers, as the study of the law, and practice in the courts, provided always, that one has the good fortune to meet able opponents, and practices under the eye of a learned and discriminating bench. The man who is to be followed in debate by a keen and watchful opponent, capable of wielding the weapons of logic, ridicule and sarcasm, and an able and learned judge, will be careful what statement of facts he makes, what propositions he lays down, and what arguments he employs. Beyond all doubt, Mr. Webster's friend, Jeremiah Mason, was greatly instrumental in training him for the great intellectual contests in which he afterwards engaged. At the bar, too, his powers have been more tasked, his mind more severely exercised, than in any other branch of his pursuits. I have no doubt, that a greater amount of thought was bestowed on his brief, and employed in his argument, in the Dartmouth College case, than was required to negotiate the treaty of Washington, or to make any one of his senatorial efforts, not excepting the reply to General Hayne.

The cases in law, in which questions of great public interest and importance were discussed by Mr. Webster, and some of which are settled in conformity with his views, are :

1st. The Dartmouth College case.

In this case, the Legislature of New Hampshire passed an act to enlarge and improve the charter of Dartmouth College. The question was, whether that charter could be altered without the consent of the corporators, a question in which all colleges, and charitable institutions, endowed by those who founded the same, have a deep interest. All these, Mr. Webster contended, had a common principle of existence, the inviolability of their charters. He succeeded, by one the most learned and logical arguments ever heard in a court of justice, in maintaining their inviolability.

2d. The second was the case of *Gibbons & Ogden*, in which the argument was made in 1824.

This case came up on an appeal from the highest court of law and equity in the State of New York, which gave an exclusive right to Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton, and their assigns, to navigate all the waters within the jurisdiction of the State, was unconstitutional and void. Mr. Webster demonstrated this proposition, and the decision of the State of New York, concurred in by all the distinguished members of the judiciary of that State, were overruled, and freedom given to steam navigation in the waters of New York.

3d. The case of the *Girard Will*, in which Mr. Webster vindicated the Christian ministry, and demonstrated the necessity of the religious instruction of the young.

4th. The Rhode Island case. This case fully sets forth, elucidates, and vindicates the principles upon which political organizations are formed, and maintained, according to American republican usage.

It remains that I should briefly refer to Mr. Webster as an agriculturist. He loved agriculture—he was a practical as well as a scientific farmer. His public speeches in England, and in this country at agricultural exhibitions, have been extensively published, and are contained in his works. Mr. Webster understood practical agriculture in all its branches—rotation of crops—manuring—planting and growth of trees—rearing of stock, &c. When absent from one or both of his farms, he corresponded with his overseers as to all the details of farming operations. This correspondence will, no doubt, be published, and will form an interesting and useful addition to his works. He took great pleasure in the pursuits of practical agriculture—but a few days before his death, he caused his stock to be driven up and exhibited to him on his lawn, in front of his house.

I have thus very briefly and imperfectly sketched the character of Mr. Webster in his private and domestic relations, and also as an orator, debater, statesman, lawyer, and agriculturist; allow me, in conclusion, once more to refer to his habits of industry.

I have said that I once met him at Albany; I will give you the history of his employments that day, as illustrating his ability to labor, (and this is by no means a singular one,) at that period of his life. He was then sixty-nine years old, and not in the enjoyment of good health. He rose, we have seen, at three o'clock in the morning; he employed himself until breakfast time in preparing his speech—he then went to breakfast with the Governor of the State—after breakfast he was accompanied by the Governor on a visit to the public in-

stitutions of Albany—at eleven o'clock he was waited on by the ladies of that place—at one o'clock he addressed several thousand citizens in the open air, an hour and a half—at the conclusion of his speech he was again waited on by such gentlemen as chose to call—afterwards he dined with several hundred of the young men of Albany, where there was the usual amount of public speaking, and he was called upon and addressed the gentlemen present in a speech distinguished for eloquence. Afterwards a torch-light procession was formed, and accompanied him to the steam-boat, destined for New York—there he took leave of Governor Hunt and other friends, and at ten o'clock at night retired to his state-room.

Now here was a day of active, and, for a portion of it, severe mental exercise, for nineteen hours continuously. Let me ask—"is there a member of the Senior Class present who would not have fainted in such a day of trial?" Yet I can bear testimony that so far from being exhausted by these labors, Mr. Webster made his appearance on the deck of the steam-boat before sun-rise the next morning, as fresh and clear as I ever saw him. I took leave of him at a very early hour at the Astor House, and again saw him, by appointment, after breakfast.

Yet, gentlemen! there are Americans who tell us—I could not write what I am about to say, without blotting the manuscript with my tears—there are Americans who tell us that the mind of Daniel Webster has, for years past, been daily besotted by sensual indulgence—that mind which was always active, except during the hours of sleep, working out important conclusions by clear processes of thought—that mind which for thirty years has been laboring, with the power of a steam-engine, for the benefit of the country—and the results are before the world—that mind which, down to the very hour, and in the very article of death, was as clear as the setting sun without a cloud, and as luminous too—that mind which, as I believe, for the very purpose of asserting its superiority over the weak and sinking body, in the very embrace of death, dictated the cry, in a voice as loud and clear as that which I now utter, "I YET LIVE." Yes!—thine enemies live also—but thy country, that country which thou hast loved, and served, and honored, will guard thy fame—ENJOY THY REPOSE, ILLUSTRIOUS IMMORTAL!



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